

Proposed Pāhala Wastewater Treatment Plant

Community Outreach Program

Round 1: Talk Story Sessions

Summary and Recommendations

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For Brown and Caldwell

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Contents

1.	Purpose and Framework	1
2.	Approach and Participants	2
2.1	Objectives and Approach	2
2.2	Talk Story Session Format	3
2.3	Profile of Participants	4
3.	Feelings about Pāhala	6
3.1	What People Valued the Most About Pāhala	6
3.2	Pāhala's Challenges	7
3.3	Vision / Future for Pāhala	8
4.	Experience with Wastewater Management	9
5.	Questions and Comments about the Proposed WWTP	10
5.1	Project Tentative Location	10
5.2	Personal Cost of Connecting to New System	11
5.3	Proposed Technology and Related Studies	12
5.4.	Condition of Existing Sewer Lines	12
5.5	Community Information and Outreach	12
6.	“One Thing”	13
6.1	December 12, 6 PM	13
6.2	December 13, 10 AM	13
6.3	December 13, 6 PM	14
6.4	December 14, 10 AM	14
6.5	December 14, 6 PM	15
7.	Evaluation and Recommendations	16
7.1	Evaluation	16
7.2	Recommendations	17

1. Purpose and Framework

The Hawai'i County Department of Environmental Management (DEM) is proposing to construct a new sewer system and operate a new Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) in Pāhala, Hawai'i. The facility will replace the current system of wastewater disposal in two County-operated Large Capacity Cesspools (LCC). These LCCs must be closed due to environmental concerns and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) requirements.

The Pāhala WWTP project will affect Pāhala residents at three levels, as follows:

1. Former plantation owner C. Brewer constructed sewer lines on 109 properties on the east side of Pāhala. These lines are within private property boundaries and transport wastewater to one of two LCCs. In addition, C. Brewer placed lines that connect each house to the public roadway, in anticipation of future hookup to the new WWTP. When the new WWTP is operational, the new lines on these properties will transport wastewater, the LCCs will close and existing lines leading to the LCCs will be decommissioned. It is noted that twelve of the 109 properties are not connected to the LCCs but have lines for future connection to the WWTP.
2. Hawaii County Code, Chapter 21, Sewers, Section 21-5 requires that, when the new sewer lines are placed in public roadways, properties fronting such roadways must connect to these lines. Approximately 66 properties, termed "newly accessible properties," which currently use their own septic tanks or cesspools for wastewater disposal, will need to connect to the new sewer lines via new lines from the structures to the main sewer lines.
3. Remaining properties in Pāhala have private wastewater disposal systems, including septic tanks and cesspools. Policy 120 of the draft Ka'ū Community Development Plan is to "extend the primary wastewater collection lines in Pāhala and Nā'ālehu so that infill development projects can connect wastewater systems built for new subdivisions to the County system." As of this writing, there is neither a time frame nor budget for the eventual connection of the rest of Pāhala to the WWTP.

A community outreach program is being conducted to exchange information about the proposed project, and work with affected residents and the general community on how to implement the project on both personal and community levels.

This report describes the overall approach in the first round of outreach meetings, provides a profile of participants, summarizes questions and comments, and recommends next steps. It is intended to provide the framework for the next round of community outreach activities.

2. Approach and Participants

2.1 Objectives and Approach

These talk story sessions comprise the first round of community outreach on the current effort to implement the Pāhala project. It is important to establish constructive dialogue with the community that would pave the way and encourage future conversations about the project. The following outlines target outcomes of this first round.

- **Assure residents we are there to listen.** A common practice of project proponents is to conduct informational meetings that are one-way communications presenting projects far along in the planning process. This provides minimal opportunities for people to tell their stories and affect project outcomes.

In these talk story sessions, the project team emphasized the need to listen to understand the community and how to continue our conversations. Further, the project team stressed throughout the sessions that community outreach discussions on this project are atypically very early in the planning and implementation process. Hence, it was noted that, while there is limited information at this time, the team was there to listen and convey questions and comments to DEM. That way, in the next round of meetings, DEM will be able to provide more information that addresses community concerns.

- **Help residents understand what is being proposed.** It was important to present project information in ways that are simple, relevant and conducive to continuing dialogue.
- **Establish a point of departure to move towards future actions and solutions.** Pāhala residents have had different experiences with wastewater disposal over the years. For some, they transitioned from a plantation-operated system to a County-run operation. For others, they installed their own systems. The talk story sessions were intended to clearly differentiate between previous efforts and current project implementation.
- **Comply with Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) deadline of December 15, 2017, to hold initial public meeting.** DEM and EPA established a schedule for completion of key milestones. The talk story sessions comprise initial public meetings and were organized to comply with this schedule.

The approach was intended to initiate a process that engages all Pāhala residents, while recognizing that the project will affect some people directly during construction and operation of the WWTP. Invitations and announcements for the talk story sessions were intended to reach all audiences, as follows:

- Property owners with C. Brewer lines on their property were mailed letters from DEM inviting them to these sessions. The letters included stamped, mail-in postcards to facilitate the RSVP process.
- Fliers were hand-delivered to “newly-accessible properties.”

- Organizational leaders were provided copies of fliers announcing meetings and asked to circulate among their members.
- Fliers were also posted in public venues, such as the post office, the Pāhala Community Center and the Ka'ū Hospital.
- Several online announcements were included in Ka'ū News Briefs available at <http://kaunewsbriefs.blogspot.com/>.

All announcements provided telephone and email options for responses and questions.

2.2 Talk Story Session Format

To optimize opportunities for Pāhala residents to attend meetings, five sessions were convened. People could choose among three evening and two morning sessions from December 12 through December 14, 2017.

Date	Time	Location
Tuesday, December 12	6:00 PM	Ka'ū Gym Multi-Purpose Conference Room
Wednesday, December 13	10:00 AM	Pāhala Community Center
Wednesday, December 13	6:00 PM	Pāhala Community Center
Thursday, December 14	10:00 AM	Ka'ū Gym Multi-Purpose Conference Room
Thursday, December 14	6:00 PM	Pāhala Community Center

The format for each meeting was as follows:

- 1. Introductions and Pāhala relationship.** Participants were asked to introduce themselves and describe their relationship to Pāhala. They were encouraged to talk about generational presence, length of residence, schools and so on.
- 2. Life in Pāhala.** Participants were asked to discuss:
 - What they valued most about Pāhala
 - Pāhala's biggest challenges
 - Their ideas and vision for the future of Pāhala
- 3. Experience with the existing sewer system.** Participants were asked to share their recollections and experience with wastewater disposal in Pāhala. They were also asked to share what they knew about the proposed project.
- 4. The Proposed Project.** Project background and overview were presented in a PowerPoint presentation.
- 5. Questions and Comments.** Project representatives encouraged participants to ask questions and voice their reactions.

6. What one message do you want DEM to hear? Participants were asked to share “one thing” that they wanted to share with the County.

The project team stressed that these meetings were being convened very early in the planning process. Often, communities express frustration that they are approached well after people can provide constructive input that can be incorporated in project plans. This frustration is typical of public and private projects, regardless of location and jurisdiction. The project team noted that these meetings allowed the project team to listen prior to concrete plans and incorporate community participation in final plans. Hence, project representatives openly acknowledged when information was not yet available.

In this first round of community outreach, the project was presented by the consulting engineer and an outreach specialist. Project representatives said that they will incorporate community input and questions in the next round of community outreach meeting, which will include DEM officials.

Each talk story session was scheduled for 1.5 hours. If it looked like the session might exceed this time, participants were given the option to continue.

2.3 Profile of Participants

Forty people participated in the five talk story sessions. One person attended all, and another attended two.

- Nineteen people (47.5 percent) were born and raised in Pāhala.
- Fourteen people (35.0 percent) moved to Pāhala from other places, including O’ahu, Kaua’i, Maui, and Philippines. They have lived in Pāhala from two to 45 years.
- Seven people (17.5 percent) currently live outside of Pāhala, including, other Ka’ū communities, Hilo, Kona, and California.

The following lists participants in each session.

December 12, 6 PM

Helena Carvalho
Davelyn
Maile David
Marissa Harmon
Albert Ledergerber
Lily Ledergerber

Julia Neal
Vicki Paaluhi
Gary Tamondong
Chandon Tamondong
Gwen Sorensen
Michael Worthington

December 13, 10 AM

Colleen Milligan
Les Iverson
Jean Hanoa

Alfred Ibarra
Julia Neal

December 13, 6 PM

Kamakani Dancil
Newton Ito
Cecilia Ito
Jan Kaleohano

Ata Kaleohano
Lenora Lorenzo – Oleyte
Julia Neal

December 14, 10 AM

Trinidad Aderinto
Milton Dacalio
Dexter Lee

Julia Neal
Edmund Olson
Sammie Stanbro

December 14, 6 PM

Francisca Cabacungan Delos Santos
Allen Fukunaga
May Galacio
Maricel Graig
Keone Grace
Sophia Hanoa
Alfred Ibarra
Mary Ibarra

Julia Neal
Keona Paaluhi
Liz Polido
Gay Polido Scott
Francisco Villa
Remy Villa
Lois Yokota

Project team participants included Michelle Sorensen, consulting engineer from Brown and Caldwell, and facilitator Berna Cabacungan from Earthplan.

3. Feelings about Pāhala

Participants tended to be long-time Pāhala residents. Of the 40 participants, 31 were either born and raised here or moved into the area over 18 years ago. Almost half of the participants were born and raised in Pāhala. Several had left to go to school and work elsewhere, and they returned to raise their children, retire, take care of their parents or simply because they preferred the Pāhala lifestyle. Of those who moved to Pāhala from elsewhere, only two have lived there less than 18 years.

3.1 What People Valued the Most About Pāhala

Participants shared common perspectives about what they valued the most about Pāhala.

- **Ōhana relationships.** The strong sense of family and close relationships are woven into their daily activities. Common statements were “we look out for each other,” “we all know each other,” “everybody gets along.” It was said that when a baby is born, everybody gives monetary gifts, and when someone dies, the town takes care of the funeral. They can ask their neighbor for a cup of sugar, and neighbors let each other know if someone visited while they were away. When a pig or cow is slaughtered, they freely share with their neighbors and family.
- **Laid back lifestyle.** Pāhala was commonly described in terms of its slow-pace. There are no traffic lights, it is quiet, and people tend to be patient. Participants often contrasted their lifestyle to their experiences with the hustle and bustle of O’ahu, crowded shopping centers and generally rushing all the time.
- **Relationship to the natural setting.** Participants felt a strong connection to the natural environment. They liked the open coastline and their ability access the ocean and mauka areas. They talked about hunting and fishing, and one person noted that the mauka to makai relationship is integral to Pāhala’s lifestyle and values – “what affects the head, affects the rest of the land, the rest of us.” It was also mentioned that Pāhala is the gateway to Volcano National Park, and this is conducive to preserve the Ka’ū coastline.
- **Tradition and plantation culture.** Many shared an appreciation for a culture steeped in the legacy left by the plantation. They remembered living in the various ethnic camps and appreciated C. Brewer taking care of basic community needs, such as flooding issues, runaway fires, roadway improvements, general enforcement and basic infrastructure. They felt that these were secure times for the community. Participants also noted that social tradition continues to be important for the community. They cited the importance of holidays and celebrations. One person said that an important tradition occurs every winter. They make sure that people do not swim and play in the ocean – “The water is hungry this time of year.”

- **Other.** There was appreciation for the high level of homeownership in Pahala (72 percent compared to County-wide 66 percent). Participants also valued the Ka'ū Hospital, the Ka'ū Community Center and Ka'ū school complex. They felt fortunate to have these facilities in their rural town.

3.2 Pāhala's Challenges

Participants were concerned about the impacts of the plantation closure, the lack of jobs and the future for Pāhala's young people. The following summarizes these and other challenges facing the town.

- **Impacts of plantation closure on operations and infrastructure.** As noted earlier, long-time residents appreciated plantation contributions and legacy to Pāhala's physical and social infrastructure. Participants said that C. Brewer was responsive to immediate issues, as well as long-term improvements. For many, the plantation closure left a void in community improvements. They feel that their community is too small to catch the attention of Hawai'i County officials. As one person said, "We've been left behind."
- **Lack of jobs and economic opportunities.** This was a common and significant concern of many participants. The termination of sugar cultivation was followed by less labor-intensive coffee and macadamia nut cultivation. Most residents must therefore travel a long way for work. There were several stories of people leaving at 3 or 4AM in the morning for jobs in Hilo, Waikōloa and Waimea. They return home at 6 PM and start all over again the next day. Participants were very concerned that young people are having a difficult time staying where they grew up because they cannot find nearby jobs.
- **Lack of enforcement.** Some participants felt that, when plantation closed, there was no community association to oversee compliance with building and other codes. They felt that some homeowners are not taking care of their properties. Participants cited farmers who do not necessarily follow zoning codes, and homeowners who have "27 dogs and 24 chickens." Another area needing enforcement is vehicular traffic on the roads leading to Wood Valley. Participants felt that semis were speeding and endangering residents.
- **Decrease in access to mauka and makai areas.** Participants said that, when the plantation was operating, employees could hunt and gather up mauka and freely access the shoreline and ocean. They complained that access is currently restricted, and they need to obtain permission. It was also felt that this is prohibitive and discouraging for young people desiring to remain in Pāhala and continue traditional food gathering.
- **Balance between type of economic growth and desired development.** While participants wanted jobs and business opportunities, they also understood that there is a price to pay for some types of development. They did not rural Pāhala replaced by large-scale residential subdivisions and gentrification. They wanted to see "smart development" and "smart planning." One person noted that he has invested "millions of dollars" in Pāhala's agriculture, its water system and hydroelectricity. Other than that, no other specific options were cited.

- **Other.** Participants were concerned that there has been no new housing since the 1980s, and a shortage of affordable housing. A serious concern related to lack of jobs was that young people have little to do. They reported increasing drug use with youth and the general population.

3.3 Vision / Future for Pāhala

When asked about what they wanted for the community's future, what they envisioned for Pāhala, participants responded with ways to solve the town's challenges. They wanted to see:

- More jobs, more economic opportunities
- Smart development whereby changes are consistent with community values
- Preservation of mauka and makai public access for hunting, gathering and fishing
- Preservation of coastal areas
- Better coordination with Hawai'i County and State governments to receive appropriate services and facilities

4. Experience with Wastewater Management

There was a wide range of knowledge, experiences and recollections about how wastewater has been managed in the past and how it is currently handled.

There was a general belief that homeowners receiving wastewater services paid \$27 to \$30 every other month for wastewater services. However, there was often confusion as to why residents were paying sewer fees. Some thought that they were pre-paying fees for the new system and did not understand that fees were related to maintaining C. Brewer connection lines to the new system.

Some property owners understood that C. Brewer installed both sewer lines leading to existing LCCs and new lines leading from their houses to the street in preparation for future hookup.

Some property owners did not know if they were hooked up to the County system. One person said he did not know he had a sewer line on his property until he was mowing his yard.

Some homeowners, who are not connected to the C. Brewer LCC lines, said that they were told they had to install their own wastewater disposal system. They were unsure how this project would affect them.

A handful of people recalled meetings about the change in wastewater system, as follows:

- Meetings held by C. Brewer prior to 1996
- DEM meeting (s) in 2010 when the “forced closure” of LCCs in 2013 was announced and there was talk of related fines the County would need to pay
- A meeting at the senior center in which people voted to have DEM take over the C. Brewer lines to LCCs and to take over the future sewer lines to an eventual WWTP.

5. Questions and Comments about the Proposed WWTP

Project location and personal cost were the two prevalent topics after the presentation. The following summarizes what was discussed.

5.1 Project Tentative Location

At the time of these meetings, the site for the proposed project was not finalized. Hawai'i County was negotiating with Kamehameha Schools on a 42-acre site located in the southeastern portion of Pāhala on the west side of Maile Road. Questions and comments regarding this site included:

- **Proximity to town and residences.** Participants' experiences with WWTPs tended to be negative. They cited smell issues and felt that such facilities are visually unattractive. They wanted the proposed WWTP located farther from town. During the project presentation, the Honoka'a WWTP was cited as an example contrasting typical WWTPs and participants were invited to tour that facility in early 2018. In terms of visual impact, it was explained that, due to significant buffer zones, people will experience what they see now.
- **Change in ambiance along Maile Road entrance.** Maile Road is a two-lane Norfolk pine-lined road connecting the eastern part of the town to Hawai'i Belt Road. Participants appreciated its quiet beauty and country feel. It was explained that there will be significant buffer zones between the facility and all edges of the site. The pine trees will remain, as will some of the macadamia nut trees visible from the roadway. The proposed disposal system will also contain native tree plantings.
- **Flooding.** Participants noted that Pāhala experiences heavy rains, and that this site is prone to flooding. They asked how this would affect the WWTP system, and it was explained how the combination of lagoons and land application methods, including an overflow basin, is designed for a 100-year storm.
- **Adequacy of site for accommodating servicing the entire town at the WWTP.** Participants asked if the tentative site would accommodate the eventual connection of all Pāhala structures to the WWTP. It was explained that, although more macadamia nut trees would be removed, the site would accommodate such expansion.
- **Cultural and environmental importance.** Participants said the tentative site is home to nēnē geese, wild turkeys and wild pigs. They noted that people hunt the wild pigs on-site, which helps put food on the table and help reduce food costs. They wanted to make sure that hunting activities and the animals do not conflict with WWTP operations or facilities. Their comments were noted, and the project team will pursue appropriate security fencing. One person said that Kamehameha Schools lands are legacy lands and not intended for sale.

- **Loss of income and jobs at macadamia nut farm.** There was concern about the loss of jobs and income if the WWTP were on this site. It was noted that the intent is to maintain agricultural activities on the site, especially because this helps to provide a visual buffer. In addition, only a portion of the site would require clearing of trees.
- **Alternate sites.** To address the aforementioned concerns, participants suggested alternate sites, including areas makai of Hawai'i Belt Road, the property east of Maile Road, and the site of the old plantation mill. Project representatives indicated that site selection evaluations will be provided to the community in future meetings.

5.2 Personal Cost of Connecting to New System

At every meeting, participants expressed great concern about how the cost of the proposed WWTP would be borne by Pāhala residents, including increase in sewer fees and taxes. Some residents had suggestions to reduce the overall project budget. For example, one resident proposed that the County focus only on the homes currently connected to the LCC and add "newly accessible" properties later as more funding becomes available. The project team clarified that the project budget includes relocating collection lines for properties currently utilizing the LCC into the county roadways. Owners of properties that become "newly accessible" as a result of the installation of the new pipelines will be responsible for the cost of their own connections. Therefore, this suggestion would not result in project cost savings. It was explained that WWTP design and construction costs are spread across the County. Further, sewer fees for those connected to County wastewater collection systems are the same throughout Hawai'i County.

Those who will need to connect to the new system were particularly concerned about the costs of connection from their houses to the main line in the public right-of-way. Of particular concern was the mandate and related costs to connect to the system from "newly accessible" properties. These property owners were very concerned because they were unaware that they were required to connect, and potential connection costs were not clarified.

A couple of participants did not want to connect and asked if they had options. The project engineer responded that Hawai'i County Code requires connection whenever a property has access to County sewer line.

Participants suggested that property owners use the same contractors hired by the County so they can get a "package deal." They also asked if the County could reimburse them the cost of their private systems to help reduce hookup costs to the new system.

The project team responded that the County is exploring funding and assistance opportunities to potentially help homeowners make necessary connections.

5.3 Proposed Technology and Related Studies

Participants were curious about proposed technology, often because they were accustomed to more mechanical systems. They tended to be accepting and even supportive of a biological-based system. Only one person, an engineer who worked for C. Brewer at the plantation, did not approve of improvements. He said, “If it ain’t broke, don’t fix it,” and wanted to approach Hawai‘i’s congressional representatives to obtain an exemption for the LCCs from the EPA.

There was interest in the types of trees used in the land disposal system. They wanted to see native trees planted, and the project engineer responded that the project team will be working with Hawaii-based resources to determine appropriate landscaping. A Kamehameha Schools representative offered to share resources, and the project team will follow up.

Participants were eager to hear about technical and environmental studies. They responded positively when project representatives said they would come back to the community as these studies progressed.

5.4. Condition of Existing Sewer Lines

Participants were curious about the working condition of existing lines on their property. One noted that her connecting line skirted around a tree, and others noted flooding conditions around sewer lines and in proximity to water lines.

Three people discussed the angle of connecting sewer lines, suggesting that sharp angles be avoided. The project engineer responded that these comments will be considered in project design.

It was noted that the Ka‘ū Elementary, Middle and High School complex recently installed a new septic system. Participants asked what would happen to this system, and if it needed to hook up to the new system. Because a variance from HAR 11-62 would be necessary to continue operation of the schools' IWS system once it becomes accessible to the County collection system, the project engineer responded that State Department of Health will determine if the system needs to be replaced.

5.5 Community Information and Outreach

Property owners of “newly accessible properties” were confused and angry about how the proposed project would affect them. The talk story flier announcement said that properties with C. Brewer connections would be affected. It did not mention other properties that would need to connect.

In all sessions, participants were generally surprised and eventually appreciative of these talk story sessions. The meetings were a departure from previous government efforts in announcing projects and typical large-scale community meetings. The project team was encouraged to 1) come back with more information, 2) continue this type of interactive dialogue, and 3) include DEM representatives in future meetings.

6. “One Thing”

At the end of the sessions, each participant was asked to share the “one thing” that they wanted to share with DEM. The following sessions lists comments.

6.1 December 12, 6 PM

I hope the department come back and respond to issues brought up tonight.

The devil is in the details. Don't make the same mistakes. Like the laterals on our street. When you connect sewage pipes, do not use sharp angles. Otherwise like Maui, it blocks up. The mayor of Maui asked me to come help fix this.

Keep taxes down.

I need to know the price because I have two properties with cesspools.

Would love the County to look below the highway.

I want DEM to look at all these meetings and take input to heart. They have listened so far. Coming out early. Have faith in the director and appreciate that he listens. The cost impact is a big deal and I want them to reinvestigate funding to help. If the County can foot the cost to connect to main line, that would be a huge help.

I would like to see County help subsidize residents.

Biggest thing is cost. Lot of people have trouble meeting expenses. Not a lot of jobs.

Do archaeological study sooner than later. Gym project got held up.

I hope the conversation keeps going.

The cost is not just about the present. I am worried about what my kids will have to pay later on. That blue line coming through our yard – we didn't ask for that. We should be exempt if the County wants to raise property taxes to pay for this. The purple properties are projected to be hooked up later. Some people think not affect them.

Cost. And the director should be out here listening. They make you two come here and there is only the tape he's listening to. He gets paid a lot of money. He should look at us in the face.

6.2 December 13, 10 AM

The site not big enough for future growth.

Use land on either side of Maile Road.

Go to the other side of Belt Road; or old mill site.

I just wanted to come here and find out. I wasn't on the gang system. Now I understand sure enough, something's up. I'm on the system. How long before whole community part of system? Only handling half the community. Doesn't solve the problem.

Think long term.

Where is construction road on Maile Street?

6.3 December 13, 6 PM

Make it cheaper. Cut the cost.

The cost concerns me.

Be more transparent. Tell the truth. Be honest. Open lines of communication as soon as possible. We understand the County is under time constraints, but you cannot expect others to be.

I agree. We need to know. We are a small community. Nobody talks to us.

Cost. Keep it low.

Everything is going up and up and up. We don't know how much it will cost. I'm afraid of that.

When will next round of meetings take place?

What is problem with siting below the highway?

The County built the gym and in the gym, there were bones. What did they do with bones if they find on this site?

General comment at the end: Appreciate meetings

6.4 December 14, 10 AM

Why are we now paying monthly if the thing not so good?

Why do we have to pay if they're not using the lines in our yard?

Why don't they move to the other side (east) of Maile Road so it's not below the town?

If they allowed us to use cesspool to begin with and change to septic tanks and want us to absorb the cost because they want to change, why don't they help us out?

Like my daughter, she has a big bill she pays monthly. What's going to happen in 2021? We live in the back of the school. Below the elementary. Not in the blue. We have our own cesspool. We'll have to get our own line to connect to the street?

I strongly encourage them to look at the property below Maile Road. It appears on paper that it's not that much different. It's interesting with waterways and lava that you wouldn't even know when they are cracks because of percolation. Running under Belt Road, is there any chance if they did expand with those yellow things, could that be expanded to the other side of the road? What's ideal for the county is not always ideal for the town.

6.5 December 14, 6 PM

How much will this cost me?

I want the County to be responsible for this project. Let us know. Inform us and be honest and respectful to people.

This is about trust. Plus take into consideration we have a lot of elderly at these meetings. We need to get young people involved. Take it to school. Let kids give feedback.

I can help Cisco get people to meeting.

Project life expectancy? Pipes given slope and pressure. Mains. More detail.

I like this system. You can deal with waste environmentally. I'm excited.

I'm all about cost to individual homeowners.

As a homeowner, what kind of responsibilities is the County expecting of me?

How much will it cost?

Keep coming back to talking to people.

Thank you to both of you. A lot of time people come with arrogance and they will fix us. So thank you.

7. Evaluation and Recommendations

7.1 Evaluation

1. This first round of community outreach met objectives.

- Residents understood the project team was there to listen. They responded enthusiastically to questions about Pāhala, and openly discussed their previous experience about wastewater disposal in their town and concerns and views about the proposed project. When the project team could not respond to questions, they were assured that their comments were being recorded and there will be follow up.
- Those who attended seemed to have acquired at least a rudimentary understanding about how the new WWTP would work. They were able to ask questions about transmission of wastewater to WWTP, and how the lagoons and land disposal system works. While they may not completely understand details, they indicated they knew that this system is different from WWTP systems they may have previously experienced. Further, they also were able to relate the proposed project to their personal situation as property owners.
- Participants were able to discuss their understanding, or lack thereof, of the wastewater system and their own personal situation. By the end of each session, participants understood that the proposed project progresses from and is a departure from previous discussions and current operations.
- The milestone date for an initial community meeting (December 15, 2017) was met.

2. Multiple options for meetings and the talk story format optimized opportunities for the community to attend and participate.

Each session was characterized by lively conversation, provoking questions and thoughtful comments. Regardless of the number of participants, the sessions had a diversity of voice and engaging conversations. It is noted that, initially, a couple of participants expressed cynicism and doubt about the outreach process. They expected confrontation and conflict typical of public meetings. However, by the end of each session, there tended to be appreciation for the ability to learn about the project and provide reactions in a non-confrontational setting.

3. Participants accepted the lack of definitive answers.

At the beginning of each session, project team representatives said that, because they were coming to the community so early in the design process, a common answer to participant questions would be “I don’t know. But we’ll check on it.” Participants understood that the reason for lack of answers. They accepted the balance between timing and definitive information.

4. There was inadequate information for “newly accessible property” owners.

As noted in Section 2.1, letters were sent to property owners who had C. Brewer lines on their properties inviting them to meetings. For owners of “newly accessible properties,” fliers were hand delivered to their properties. The fliers said that “The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency requires that the two County-operated Large Capacity Cesspools that receive wastewater from Pāhala properties previously served by the C. Brewer system must be closed due to environmental concerns.” There were no indications that the 66 owners of “newly-accessible properties” would be required to connect to new sewer lines fronting their lots. Some participants who owned “newly accessible properties” did not initially realize that they were directly affected.

7.2 Recommendations

Two types of recommendations are presented for the second round of meetings. These are intended to follow up on the first round and prepare for the third round.

1. Information Follow-up. Project representatives made a commitment to provide additional information, as available, in the next round of meetings. It is understood that some information will not be available during the next round. It is nevertheless critical that the project team acknowledge this commitment and at least provide status. The following lists topics for further information.

- *Site selection process.* Several participants asked why the tentative site was selected and suggested other sites. It is recommended that a summary table of previously considered sites and selection rationale, as well a related map, be presented.
- *Flooding at tentative site.* Participants claimed that this site is prone to flooding. If possible, there should be some response.
- *Cost range and homeowner assistance possibilities.* Regarding cost, it is recommended that cost factors be identified, and, if possible, a basic unit, i.e. per linear foot, that might help people understand what might be involved. Also, more information about possible financial assistance should be provided.
- *Clarification on sewer fee structure.* There was often confusion about who pays what and why. Information on the fee structure should be presented clearly.

- *Conditions of existing pipes.* Participants raised questions about what was on their property and possible problems. It is recommended that information on previous County evaluation and how future assessment will be made prior to or during construction.
- *Short-and long-term Impact on macadamia nut cultivation.* It is recommended that a preliminary order of magnitude cost of project impact be estimated and presented in terms of the overall macadamia nut cultivation operation in Pāhala. Further, the project team should describe, in general terms, the possible lease arrangements with the future macadamia nut operator.
- *Conceptual plan of full buildout.* Participants were concerned that the tentative site is not large enough to support serving all Pāhala, while still maintaining visual buffers. It is recommended that a very preliminary schematic be presented that shows full buildout.
- *Possible land application trees.* Some information has already been provided, and status of selecting trees should be provided.
- *Fencing around WWTP perimeter.* Options for fence location, height, and materials should be provided.
- *Tour of Honokaa WWTP.* Residents showed interest in attending a tour of the Honokaa plant with DEM and the project team. A tour should be scheduled and advertised in the spring of 2018.

2. **Next Round of Meetings.** In the next round, it is important to continue dialogue with those most affected and broaden the base of participants. The following are recommended:

- *Meeting with property owners with C. Brewer lines to LCC and to the roadway.* The purpose of this meeting is to provide general project information and discuss how the project will personally affect this group. County policy regarding connection of properties with Modern Deeds should be clarified prior to this meeting. Invitation letters should be sent to all, including a self-addressed postcard for responses.
- *Meeting with “newly accessible” property owners.* The purpose of this meeting is to provide general project information and discuss how the project will personally affect them. It is important to engage with this group directly and separately, given that the first round did not clarify that the project will affect them. Invitation letters should be sent to all, including a self-addressed postcard for responses.
- *Meeting open to the general public.* The purpose of this meeting is to widen the base of participants and provide accurate and up to date project information. If the environmental documents are available, key findings can be presented. A combination of informing first round participants, fliers, newspaper / blog announcements and contacting organizational leaders will provide a broad network to inform Pāhala residents.

It is recommended that DEM representatives attend and field questions. It is further recommended that the design engineers for both the treatment plant and collection system participate in responding to design-related questions.

Further, the project team should consider a very simple handout that includes a brief description of the project, an overview of the disposal process and its benefits, and a map showing existing and proposed lines, as well as the project site.

In terms of timing, it is recommended that the next round be conducted in early May. Project team representatives indicated this possible time frame would allow the team to develop responses to key topics.